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Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony

Laura Lee Hope

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

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TOBY WAS RINGING THE BELL.

Frontispiece. (Page 135.)

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony.

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**BUNNY BROWN
AND HIS SISTER SUE
AND THEIR SHETLAND PONY**

CHAPTER I

IN THE ARK

"Oh, Bunny! Here comes Bunker Blue!"

"Where is he? I don't see him!"

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were playing on the shady side porch of their house one morning, when the little girl, looking up from a cracker box which had been made into a bed—where she was putting her doll to sleep—saw a tall boy walking up the path.

"There's Bunker!" went on Sue to her brother, Bunny, at the same time pointing. "Maybe he's come to take us for a ride in one of daddy's fishing boats!"

"Have you, Bunker?" asked Bunny, standing up and brushing some shavings from his little jacket, for he had been using a dull kitchen knife, trying [2] to whittle out a wooden boat from a piece of curtain stick. "Oh, Bunker, have you?"

"Have I what?" asked the tall boy, who worked on the dock where Mr. Brown, the father of Bunny and Sue, carried on a boat and fish business. "Have I what?" Bunker asked again, and he stood still and gazed at the two small children who were anxiously looking at him.

"Have you come to take us for a ride?" asked Bunny.

"In one of daddy's boats?" added Sue, who generally waited for her brother to speak first, since he was a year older than she.

"Not this time, messmates," answered Bunker Blue with a laugh, calling the children the name one sailor sometimes gives to another. "Not this time messmates. I've come up to get the ark."

"Oh, the ark!" cried Bunny. "Did you hear that, Sue? Bunker has come up to get the ark!"

"Oh! Oh!" and Sue fairly squealed in delight. "Then we'll have a nice ride in that. Wait, Bunker, till I put my doll away, and I'll come with you. Wait for me!"

"And I'll come, too," added Bunny. "I can bring my boat with me. 'Tisn't all done yet," he [3] added, "but I can whittle on it when we ride along, and then I can sail it when we get to the dock."

"Now avast there and belay, messmates!" cried Bunker Blue with a laugh, using some more of the kind of talk he heard among the sailors that came to Mr. Brown's dock with boats of fish. "Wait a minute! I didn't say I had come to give you a ride in the ark. I just came to get it."

"But you will let us ride, won't you, Bunker?" asked Bunny, smiling at the tall boy.

"Cause we'll sit just as still as anything," added Sue.

"And I won't touch the steering wheel—not once!" promised Bunny.

"I guess you'd better not—not after you once got almost run away with in the big ark," said Bunker. "I should say not!"

"Oh, please let us come with you!" begged Sue. "We want awful much to ride in the ark, Bunker!"

While the two children were talking to the tall boy another little girl had crawled under the fence from the street, and was now standing near Bunny and his sister. She was Sadie West, one of Sue's chums, and when she heard Bunny's sister begging for a ride in the "ark" Sadie said: [4]

"Oh, Sue! is he going to take your Noah's ark away? I wouldn't let him if I were you!"

"It isn't Noah's ark at all," Sue explained. "We call the big automobile, that we had such a long ride in, the ark. It looks a little like a Noah's ark, but it's bigger, and we can all get in it," she added.

"Oh!" exclaimed Sadie. "I thought Bunker meant he was going to take your little ark, and all the wooden animals, away," she added.

"Not this time," said Bunker Blue. "Your father sent me up, Bunny, to get the big auto—the ark, as you call it. It's got to be fixed, and I'm to drive it to the shop over at East Milford. That's why I came up. Where's your mother? I want to tell her I'm taking away the ark, so she won't think some tramps or some gypsies have run off with it."

"I'll call her," Sue said, while Bunny kept on brushing the tiny whittlings from his jacket and short trousers. And there was a queer look on the face of Bunny Brown.

"What are you making, Bunny?" asked Bunker, as he waited for Sue to go into the house and give her mother the message.

"Boat," Bunny answered. [5]

"Pretty small one, isn't it?" inquired Bunker, who knew a lot about boats and fish, from having worked at Mr. Brown's dock a number of years. "Awful small boat."

"It's a lifeboat that I'm going to put on my big sailboat," explained Bunny, for he had a large boat, with a real sail on it that could be raised and lowered. It was not a boat large enough for him and Sue to ride on, though Sue sometimes gave one of her dolls a trip on it. "I have to have a lifeboat on my sailboat," Bunny went on, "cause maybe a scumbarine might sink my big ship."

"That's so," agreed Bunker. "Well, Bunny, you go in and tell your mother I'm going to take the ark, will you? I'm in a hurry, and I guess Sue forgot what she went after. You go in and tell your mother."

"Yes, I'll do that," Bunny promised. "But can't we have a ride in the ark with you, Bunker?"

"Not this time, Bunny!"

"Please, Bunker!"

"No, your father didn't say anything about taking you over to the East Milford auto shop with me, and I don't dare do it unless he says so."

"Well, we can ask him," went on Bunny eagerly.

"No, I haven't time to run down to the dock [6] again, and your father is busy there. A big load of fish came in, and he has to see that they get iced, so they won't spoil. Hurry and tell your mother— Oh, here she comes now!" exclaimed Bunker Blue, as Mrs. Brown came to the door. Sue and Sadie West stood behind her.

"Did you want to see me, Bunker?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes'm," answered the boy. "Mr. Brown sent me up to get the ark. He wants me to drive it over to Simpson's garage, in East Milford, to have it looked over and fixed. I thought if I went into the barn and took the machine out without telling you, maybe you'd think some gypsies ran away with it."

"Why! are there any gypsies around now, Bunker?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, I heard the other day that a band of them was camping up along the creek. But I guess they won't come bothering around here."

"If they do I'll sic Splash, my dog, on 'em," said Bunny.

"Yes, I guess Splash will scare off the gypsies," agreed Bunker Blue with a laugh. Then he added: "So, now I've told you what I'm going [7] to do, Mrs. Brown, I'll go and get the ark and drive it over."

"All right, Bunker," said Mrs. Brown. "Is my husband very busy?"

"Yes'm. A big boatload of fish just came in, and he's seeing to having 'em iced."

"Oh, then he can't come up. I was just going to telephone that I want the sideboard moved to the other end of the room, and it's too heavy for Uncle Tad to manage alone. I thought Mr. Brown might run up and help, but if he's so busy with the fish — —"

"I'll help," offered Bunker. "I'm not in such a hurry as all that. I'll help Uncle Tad move the sideboard, and then I'll get the auto."

"Can't we go with you?" begged Sue. "Can't we have a ride in the ark, Mother?"

"Oh, my, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Bunker can't be bothered with you children."

"I wouldn't mind taking them, ma'am," said the fish boy. "In fact, I'd like to, but their father didn't say anything about it. Besides, I'll have to walk back from East Milford after I leave the ark there to be fixed. It'd be too far for them to walk back." [8]

"Of course it would. Run along now, Bunny and Sue, and have some fun by yourselves. Don't bother Bunker."

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue stood on the side porch looking at one another as Bunker went in the house to help Uncle Tad move the sideboard. Uncle Tad was an old soldier who lived with the Brown family. He was Mr. Brown's uncle, but Bunny and Sue thought they owned just as much of the dear old man as did their father. Sadie West, who had crawled in under the fence instead of going around by the gate, ran home again, leaving Bunny and Sue by themselves.

"Say, Sue," began Bunny in a low voice, looking toward the house to make sure his mother and Bunker Blue had gone inside.

"What, Bunny?" asked the little girl.

"I know what we can do," went on Bunny.

"What?"

This time Bunny whispered.

"We can go out to the barn," he said in a low voice, his lips close to his sister's ear, "an' get in the ark when Bunker doesn't see us. He can't see us 'cause he's in the house helping Uncle Tad move the sideboard. We can easy get in the ark." [9]

"What for?" Sue wanted to know. "Bunker said he wouldn't give us a ride."

"Yes. But if we're in there he'll have to!"

"Why?" asked Sue.

"'Cause," whispered Bunny, "he won't know we're in there at all, Sue!"

"Won't he?" asked Sue, her eyes shining.

"Nope! While Bunker's in the house helping Uncle Tad move the sideboard, we'll crawl in the back end of the ark. And we'll keep

awful still, and we'll have a nice ride over to East Milford, and Bunker won't know a thing about it!"

"Oh, let's do it!" cried Sue, always ready to take part in the tricks Bunny thought of. "Let's do it! I'll take my doll!"

"And I'll take my little lifeboat. 'Tisn't all made yet, but that won't hurt! Come on!"

Quietly the two children tiptoed down off the side porch. Through the open dining-room windows they could hear Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad moving the sideboard.

Out to the barn went Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue. In the barn was the ark – the big auto – as large as a moving van. In it the whole Brown family had made a tour the previous summer. It really was like an ark, for it had rooms in it [10] where the children and grown-ups could sleep, and a place to cook and eat meals.

"Now don't make any noise!" whispered Bunny to his sister. "We'll just crawl inside the ark and cover up with blankets, and Bunker won't know we're here. Then he'll start off and when we get to East Milford we can – –"

"Oh, we can jump out and holler 'boo!' at him an' scare him!" laughed Sue, clapping her chubby hands in delight.

"Yes, we can do that. But not now!" whispered Bunny. "Hurry up an' crawl in, an' don't make any noise!"

So the two children entered the ark by the rear door, and found some blankets with which they covered themselves in two of the bunks, built on the sides of the big auto.

What would happen next? [11]

CHAPTER II

THE FRIGHTENED PONY

Bunker Blue came whistling out of the house. He and Uncle Tad had moved the sideboard to the other end of the room, and now Mrs. Brown and the hired girl were putting the place to rights.

"Well, I wonder where Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue have gone?" said Bunker, aloud, as he stopped whistling. "I don't see them," and he looked around. "I'd like to give them a ride in the ark," he went on, "but their father didn't say anything about it, and he might not like it. When the big auto gets fixed then I can take them for a ride."

Then Bunker went out to the barn and took his seat at the steering wheel of the ark.

"Well, here I go!" he said, still talking aloud to himself, as he often did, and he put his foot on the self-starter, which made the engine of the auto go without any one having to get out in front and turn the handle, like the crank of a hand [12] organ. "Here I go, but I do wish I could give Bunny and Sue a ride."

And back in the auto, under some blankets in the bunks, sounded two snickering noises.

"Hello! I wonder what that is?" exclaimed Bunker, as he heard them. "Is that you, Splash?" he called, for sometimes, he knew, the big dog that Bunny and Sue so often played with, crawled into the auto to sleep. "Is that you, Splash?"

No answer came.

"I guess it was just the wind," said Bunker Blue, as he steered the auto out through the big barn doors. "It was only the wind."

And inside the ark Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue had to stuff their chubby fists into their mouths to keep from laughing. Oh, if Bunker Blue should hear them!

As Bunker steered the big auto down the driveway past the house, Mrs. Brown came running to the door, waving her hand.

"Bunker! Bunker Blue!" she cried. "Wait a minute!"

The auto was making such a noise that the fish boy could not hear what Mrs. Brown was saying, but he could see her.

"Whoa!" he called, just as if the big auto were [13] a horse; and then he put on the brakes and brought it to a stop.

"Bunker," went on Mrs. Brown, "Mr. Brown just telephoned me to tell you to drive down to the dock and stop for him. He's going to East Milford with you. He wants to talk to the garage man about fixing the auto," for the big machine needed some repairs after its long tour.

"All right. I'll stop at the dock and get Mr. Brown," said Bunker. "I guess he must have got the fish iced and put away sooner than he expected. Now if I had Bunny and Sue I could take them with me," he went on.

"Take Bunny and Sue with you? What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Oh, when they heard I was going to East Milford with the ark they wanted to come along. But I said I didn't believe their father would let them, and I didn't have time to go back and ask him. But now, as long as I have to go to the dock to get him, I could take them with me, and ask him now. Maybe he'd let them go."

"Yes, it is too bad," said Mrs. Brown. "But I don't know where the children went. I guess they ran over to Sadie West's house to play. But you haven't time to stop for them if Mr. Brown is [14] in a hurry. They can ride some other time. Drive along, Bunker."

Now if Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue had heard this talk they might, then and there, have called out that they were already in the auto. And, if they had done so, perhaps a whole lot of things that happened afterwards might not have happened.

But you never can tell what is going to take place next in this world. The reason Bunny and Sue didn't hear what their mother and Bunker said was because they had their heads covered with the

blankets, so their snickers and laughter wouldn't be heard outside the ark.

And there they stayed, inside the big auto, as Bunker started off once more, driving first to the boat and fish dock to get Mr. Brown, who was going to East Milford with him.

"It's too bad the children aren't here," said Mrs. Brown as she went back into the house. "They could have a nice ride. I wonder where they ran off to?"

If Mrs. Brown could have seen Bunny and his sister then, I think she would have been surprised. But she did not see them, and, for a little while, she gave them no further thought, as she was so [15] busy straightening the room, after Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue had moved the sideboard to its new place.

On rumbled the big auto, and Bunny and Sue lay in the bunks having a nice ride. They did not know just where they were going, and they certainly never thought they were on their way to the boat and fish dock, for they had not heard what their mother said. They kept covered with the blankets for some little time, afraid lest their occasional snickers and laughter might be heard by Bunker Blue.

"Hi, Sue!" called Bunny, after a while, during which the auto had rolled down the road some little way.

"What is it?" Sue asked.

"It's too hot to keep under the covers. If we make only a little noise now Bunker can't hear us."

"All right," Sue agreed. "But we mustn't make too much noise."

"No," said Bunny, and he threw off the covers and sat up in the bunk. His sister did the same thing, and then they went out in the main "room" of the ark. Of course, it was not a very large room, but it was pretty big for being inside an [16] auto. It had a little table and some stools in it, and when the Browns were on their tour they often ate in that room, when it was too rainy to have their meals outside.

After a time the auto stopped, and then, to the surprise of Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue, they heard the voice of their father. He was talking to Bunker Blue.

"So you got my telephone message, did you, Bunker?" asked Mr. Brown.

"Yes, sir. Mrs. Brown told me just as I was coming out with the ark. So I came here before going over to East Milford."

"That's what I wanted you to do. I want to ride over with you. I had the men ice the fish, so they'll be all right. Is every one well up at my house—Bunny and Sue?"

"Yes, they're all right," answered Bunker, as Mr. Brown climbed up to the seat of the big auto. "Bunny and Sue wanted to come with me," Bunker went on, "but I didn't know whether you'd want 'em to, so I didn't let 'em come."

"Well, that's too bad," said Mr. Brown. "If I had known they wanted to come, and that I was going myself, I'd have let you bring them. But it's too late now and — —" [17]

"Oh, no, Daddy! It isn't too late!" cried Bunny, who had listened to what his father and Bunker were saying. "It isn't too late! Please take us with you!"

"Cause we're here now!" added Sue.

And as her brother opened the big, rear doors of the auto, he and Sue stepped out.

"Well, I do declare!" cried Mr. Brown, running around to the back of the big car and seeing his two little children. "Where did you come from?"

"We hid in the auto!" came from Bunny.

"We wanted a ride, and we didn't let Bunker know we got in," added Sue.

"Well, I certainly didn't know you were there!" cried Bunker.

"We got in when you and Uncle Tad were moving the sideboard," explained Bunny.

"That wasn't just the right thing to do," said Mr. Brown, shaking his head. "However, as I would have taken you if I had been there, we'll forgive you this time. Open the little front window, Bunker,

and the children can ride in the front part of the auto, where they can look out and where I can talk with them."

In the front part of the ark, just back of the seat, was a window cut in the end of the big car. It [18] opened into a room near the bunks, and chairs could be placed under the window so those who sat in them could look out, just as in a regular auto.

Mr. Brown and Bunker Blue took their places on the front seat, and once more the auto started off, and this time Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue did not have to stuff their fists in their mouths to keep from snickering and giggling. It was all right for them to have a ride in the ark.

Down the road they went, toward East Milford, where the ark was to be left for repairs.

"Will we have to walk back?" asked Bunny, talking through the front window to his father.

"No, I guess we can come back by train. It's too far to walk on a warm day."

"I like to ride in a train," said Sue, as she held her doll in her lap, while Bunny put aside his little wooden boat. The auto was no place to do any whittling, he found.

As the big ark went around a bend in the road the children, looking ahead, suddenly saw something at which they cried:

"Oh, look!"

"What a dandy little pony!" added Bunny.

"And it's afraid!" said Sue.

Coming down the road toward the big ark was [19] a small Shetland pony, hitched to a basket cart, and in the cart sat a little man. He was not as large as Bunker Blue, who wasn't a grown-up man yet.

Something certainly seemed to be the matter with the pony. He reared on his hind legs, and tried to turn around and run back. The man stood up in the cart and shouted something, but the children could not tell what it was.

"Stop the ark, Bunker!" cried Mr. Brown. "The big auto is frightening the little pony! Stop!"

But it was too late, for, a moment later, the Shetland pony broke loose from the cart, turned around and started to run back up the road.

The man, again shouting something, leaped out of the cart and ran back after the pony.

"Come on, Bunker!" cried Mr. Brown. "This was partly our fault! We must help the man catch the pony!"

"And we'll help!" said Bunny and Sue, as they, too, got out of the ark.

So, while this is happening, I'll take just a moment to tell my new readers something about the two children, whose adventures I am to relate to you in this book. This volume is the eighth one [20] in the series. The first, called "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue," introduced you to the two children. In that first book I told you that they lived with their father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Brown in the seaport town of Bellemere, on Sandport Bay. Mr. Brown was in the boat and fish business, and hired a number of men and boys, of whom Bunker was one.

With the family also lived Uncle Tad, of whom I have spoken, and then there was the hired girl, and Splash, the dog. The children loved them both, and they also loved Jed Winkler, an old sailor of the town, but Miss Euphemia Winkler, his sister, they did not love so well, though they liked the funny antics of Wango, a monkey, that Mr. Winkler had brought back from one of his many voyages.

Bunny Brown was about six years old, and Sue was a year younger. She had brown eyes and curly hair, and Bunny's eyes were blue, and his hair had once been curly, but now was getting straighter. Bunny and Sue were always having fun, and if you want to read about some of it just look in the second book, which tells about them on Grandpa's farm. There Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue played circus and had even better [21] times, as related in that volume. In Aunt Lu's city home they – well, I guess it will be best if you read that book for yourselves, instead of having me telling you partly about it here.